

and systematic attempt to prevent millions of elderly voters, young voters, students, minority, and low-income voters from exercising their constitutional right to engage in the democratic process. Voter ID laws are becoming all too common.

But make no mistake: Voter ID laws are a poll tax. People who struggle to pay for basic necessities cannot afford a voter ID.

The right to vote is precious and almost sacred and one of the most important blessings of our democracy. Today we must be strong in protecting that blessing. We should be making it easy, simple, and convenient for people to vote.

Before the Voting Rights Act of 1965, people stood in unmovable lines. Sometimes people were asked to count the number of bubbles in a bar of soap, the number of jelly beans in a jar. People were asked to pass a so-called literacy test. Lawyers, doctors, teachers, and college professors flunked the so-called literacy test. Before the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 46 years ago, many people were jailed, beaten, and some were even killed for trying to register and vote.

We must not step backward toward another dark period in our history. The vote is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have in a democratic society. We must fight back. We must speak up and speak out. We must never, ever go back.

We will not stand idly by while millions of Americans are denied their right to participate in the democratic process.

CUT, CAP, AND BALANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Cut, Cap, and Balance Act.

The national debt has shattered confidence in our economy, has cost jobs, and is preventing our economic recovery. Working families across our Nation are living within their means during tough times. If the rest of America gets it, why doesn't Washington?

I recently did a Main Street-style walk-and-talk in my district where I met with a number of small business owners and their employees. They shared their concern about our out-of-control debt and frustration with Washington for enacting policies that hold down job creation and economic growth rather than fostering an environment that will enable them to thrive. But the comment I heard most often was, "What is Washington thinking?" I told them I really don't understand it either.

President Obama has spent his administration enacting policies that have added more debt to our Nation than the previous 43 Presidents combined. The tragic reality is that the President's big spending policies only

made things worse. Unemployment is at 9.2 percent, and that doesn't count the millions who have given up. The President merely fomented a cycle of debt and joblessness that defines the last 2½ years, which has placed us where we're at today.

Now, with the national debt at crisis levels, he is standing in the way of commonsense solutions; offering only lectures, not leadership. He has asked Congress to consent to continue business as usual without making serious spending reforms.

As a matter of conscience, this Congress cannot support allowing President Obama to continue to steer America's debt past the point of no return. Mr. Speaker, we will be judged harshly, and rightfully so, by future generations if we fail to act. The Cut, Cap, and Balance Act ends the era of rampant government spending. It immediately reduces spending by \$100 billion, cuts \$6 trillion over the next 10 years, and demands a strong balanced budget amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the Cut, Cap, and Balance Act is what the American people want and what Washington desperately needs.

CONGRATULATING THE ELECTRIC BOAT WORKFORCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, in March of 2009, the USS *Hartford*, a 17-year-old Los Angeles-class submarine, was steaming into port in the Strait of Hormuz. Visibility was low, and they were riding at ocean surface level when, out of the blue, they were struck by the USS *San Antonio*, an LPD amphibious ship. When it violently collided with the *Hartford*, the *Hartford* rolled 85 degrees, throwing sailors, anything that wasn't tied down, flying into the air.

The good news is that the collision did not result in a breach of the submarine. There was no leak through the pressure hull. But the bad news is that the sail of the submarine was badly torn 20 to 25 degrees.

The ship limped home to its home port in Groton, Connecticut, which was a tough voyage going across the Atlantic, again riding at the surface, which, as many people who know submariners know, is the worst place to ride a submarine. But it made it back to port.

And then the challenge was before the shipyard about how to repair a ship that was 17 years old, that was built with totally different technology, hand-drawn prints, a workforce that had largely retired, and parts that really weren't in existence anymore. But the folks at Electric Boat, 450 strong, came together as a team and, calling back some of their retirees, were able, over a period of 18 months, to perform the most ultimate body shop repair job of a Los Angeles-class submarine.

And I'm happy to report to this House that the USS *Hartford* is now back underway, performing its missions, and will extend the life of, again, a submarine that this country invested close to \$1 billion 20 years ago when it was first constructed. Again, the replacement costs, if this work had not been done, would be close to \$2 billion. What the folks at EB were able to do, again, at a cost of about 5 percent of that, was to get the USS *Hartford* operating and at great savings to the U.S. taxpayer.

And I want to share this story because it demonstrates that when you invest in people, nuclear welders today, as Admiral Kevin McCoy testified before the House Armed Services Committee last week, have a value to the U.S. workforce almost as great as a surgeon in terms of the skills that they have.

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When you invest in people, when you have those skills and when you have the kind of teamwork that we see at EB, this country can succeed in ways that no other country in the world can even touch us. The complexity of a nuclear submarine matches anything that a space shuttle entails in terms of the challenges to support human life in an environment where human life cannot exist. And the capabilities of one of these vessels, again, defy almost human imagination.

So congratulations to the workforce at Electric Boat for showing again that the United States of America is capable of almost taking on any challenge when it has the right combination of investment, skill and talent, something which, as we look at our challenges that we face as a Nation today, is something that we can both take inspiration from, but also learn valuable lessons about where the right priorities of this government should be. And investing in education, workforce skills again is the best investment to grow this economy and solve America's problem.

Mr. Speaker, I will include in the RECORD an article from The New London Day written by Jennifer McDermott, which again documents this amazing story of technological success.

[From TheDay.com, July 17, 2011]

ELECTRIC BOAT GETS USS HARTFORD BACK TO SEA

(By Jennifer McDermott)

REPAIRS TO DAMAGED SUB TOTAL \$120 MILLION

GROTON, CT.—Repairing a severely damaged 17-year-old submarine with the technology Electric Boat uses to build modern subs was like reconstructing a Ford Model T in a Lexus shop.

The Navy contracted with EB for about \$120 million worth of repairs to the USS *Hartford* after the Los Angeles-class submarine collided with a Navy amphibious ship in the Strait of Hormuz in 2009.

The Navy wanted the submarine back at sea as soon as possible—ideally, in one year.

The repair team at EB knew the *Hartford* (SSN 768) had rolled about 85 degrees and